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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8420
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 6464
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 6779
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 2068
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 4815
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 6030
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2394
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 0114
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 4157
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 3847
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 2042
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 3192
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000489

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/01/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [CH](#) [IN](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: PRIME MINISTER KOIRALA TRYING TO BALANCE
INTERESTS WITH TIBETANS

REF: STATE 43655

Classified By: Ambassador Nancy J. Powell. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

Summary

11. (C) As instructed (reftel), the Ambassador used a May 1 meeting with Prime Minister Koirala to express official U.S. concern about the treatment of Tibetans by Nepali authorities. She urged the Prime Minister to ensure the right to peaceful protest was maintained. Foreign Secretary Acharya responded that the Home Ministry and the police had been urged to use restraint. The Prime Minister's response was also favorable, but he added that he faced a difficult task with the Tibetans of balancing human rights and Chinese interests.

Ambassador Urges Restraint

12. (C) The Ambassador led off her requested meeting with Prime Minister G.P. Koirala on May 1 by expressing the U.S. Government's official concern about the Government of Nepal's (GON's) treatment of Tibetans in Nepal, as instructed (reftel). She urged the Prime Minister to ensure that their right to peaceful protest was maintained and the human rights in general of the Tibetan community were respected. The Nepali police needed to show restraint in dealing with any Tibetan protests, as they had done during a large-scale protest on April 28. The Ambassador also emphasized the importance of the GON continuing the so-called "gentleman's agreement" by which Tibetans were allowed to pass through Nepal to India. This time of year, there were normally large numbers of Tibetans at the Tibetan Refugee Reception Center, but currently the Center housed almost no one. She also noted the persistent reports of Chinese police appearing on the Nepali side of the border.

Foreign Secretary Defends GON Actions

13. (C) Foreign Secretary Gyan Chandra Acharya responded that

the GON had instructed the Home Ministry and the head of the Nepal Police to use restraint in handling Tibetan protesters.

He pointed out that the police had generally released any Tibetans who were arrested by the evening and that they never held them any longer than necessary, but that this accommodating action by the authorities had received little international press attention, which helped the Nepalis' relations with China. Acharya denied that any Chinese police were on the Nepali side of the border. He attributed the fall in Tibetan refugees fleeing to Nepal to a crackdown on border crossers by the Chinese authorities.

Prime Minister Responds Favorably

14. (C) The Prime Minister responded favorably to the Ambassador's concern, affirming that Tibetan rights needed to be protected. He indicated that the GON did not want to see its reputation suffer as China's had over this issue. But he stated as well that Nepal was in a difficult position. He voiced concern that the Tibetan issue could be used by the Maoists and Chinese to so destabilize Nepal that it could prompt the Indians to invade and annex Nepal as they had done with Sikkim in the 1970s. Koirala ventured that perhaps he should explain Nepal's difficult balancing act to the Tibetans so they understood what the GON was facing.

Comment

15. (C) The Prime Minister's alarmist comments about Nepal's possible Sikkim-like future aside, Nepal does face a

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challenge in balancing genuine Chinese concerns about the security of their diplomatic facilities in Kathmandu with the right of Tibetans to protest. The GON has failed to strike the right balance, and has failed to use sufficient restraint on occasion in recent weeks in dealing with the protests. The Prime Minister, however, is now on notice that Nepali authorities must do a better job of protecting Tibetan rights in the future. Local media coverage of the Embassy's press statement on the meeting has led with the Tibetan issue.
POWELL